

SUBIECTUL al II-lea

(60 de puncte)

Read the text below. For questions 1-10, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

A brief history of the UK Parliament

Parliament started life as an English affair. It was not much of a Parliament - more of a talking shop for the king and rich men. The king asked their advice, but did what he wanted. These meetings morphed into a formal arrangement which eventually became the House of Lords. In those days - and for several centuries later - England was busy fighting with Scotland and raiding Wales.

By the 13th Century, a parliament was when kings met up with English barons to raise cash for fighting wars - mostly against Scotland. Thanks to Magna Carta of 1215, kings were now obliged to ask before taking anyone's money. That did not stop the rows though. Some barons got fed up with Henry III - not least because of his failed, expensive battles in Wales. The ambitious Simon de Montfort sidelined Henry and made himself ruler. De Montfort was a big fan of Parliament. The one in 1265 was the first to involve "ordinary" folk - knights, not just the super-rich. And it was the first time elections were held - the first stirrings of the House of Commons we know today. The venue was usually Westminster, where one enterprising monarch had built a massive hall on a swamp, which grew into the Palace of Westminster. Westminster Hall is still in use today.

Scotland had its own parliament from the 13th century, which was occasionally held in open air. In those days, though, the king had the real power. So one of the early campaigns for independence was sparked by an English king declaring himself king of Scotland. William Wallace led the rebellion. In those days campaign weapons were bows and arrows. Wallace was eventually found guilty of treason. He was dragged through the streets of London naked before being hanged, drawn and quartered.

In the early days there were no rules on who could vote. But a feeling developed that too many "persons of low estate" were doing so. So from 1430 you could only vote if you owned property worth 40 shillings. The rule stayed in place for 400 years. Ireland also had its own parliament from the 13th Century. In 1542, Irish MPs decided that whoever was king of England should also be king of Ireland. They kept their parliament going though.

The seeds of a UK Parliament were sown in 1542 when Wales came on board. At the time, Wales was a patchwork of independent areas. But along came Henry VIII, a man fond of dramatic gestures. Having given the Catholic Church its marching orders, he was worried that the Catholics would not go quietly. To stop the Welsh coming under their influence, he decided Wales would be ruled by England. By now Parliament was a full-blooded institution and Wales was allowed to send representatives. Henry called it an Act of Union but it was more of a forced marriage.

By 1603, England and Scotland had the same king but different parliaments. King James tried to persuade the English Parliament to bring the Scottish Parliament into the fold. But English MPs refused to let any Scots into the Westminster club.

The Commons got into its stride in the 1620s. Fights in the chamber... the king trying to arrest MPs. Eventually, Charles I dissolved Parliament for 11 years. He brought it back because he was short of money for a war with... Scotland. The rows got worse, leading to a war between Parliament and the king. The king was put on trial and then executed. Hard to imagine nowadays but the Commons voted to abolish the monarchy altogether.

After the civil war, England became a republic under Oliver Cromwell. Cromwell had big ideas. He annexed Scotland and Ireland into a full union with a single parliament at Westminster. The 1654 parliament was the first one in which the whole of Britain was represented. But Cromwell dissolved it pretty quickly when MPs refused to do his **bidding**.

At the end of the 18th Century, there was a powerful campaign for Irish independence from England. The English response? To crush the rebellion brutally and bring Ireland firmly into the UK with another Act of Union. That was the end of the Irish Parliament. A hundred Irish MPs turned up at Westminster. By now, the Commons chamber was getting pretty crowded.

There was a succession of rebellions in Ireland, throughout the 19th Century, against Britain. Moderate rebels settled on "Home Rule" as the way forward - which included bringing back an Irish Parliament. Just as the Westminster Parliament looked set to agree, World War One broke out. Finally in 1920 - after a rebellion which became a civil war - a law was passed dividing Ireland into north and south. Northern Ireland was given its own parliament, which was suspended in 1972 because of the Troubles. The south became a new independent Irish state. And, of course, this arrangement was fiercely controversial for most of the 20th Century.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics>

1. Why was the Parliament set up in the beginning?
 - A. Out of necessity.
 - B. The king imposed it.
 - C. To advise on state affairs.
 - D. To discuss war strategies.

2. How did Simon de Montfort become a ruler?
 - A. By sending Henry III to prison.
 - B. By holding elections for the House of Commons.
 - C. By forming an alliance with the barons.
 - D. By putting the king out of action.

3. Why did the first independence battle start in Scotland?
 - A. Because they wanted to start their own Parliament.
 - B. A Scottish king declared himself king of Scotland.
 - C. A Scottish king declared himself king of England.
 - D. England attempted to take over Scotland.

4. What was the condition you had to fulfil in order to be able to vote?
 - A. Owning a property of a certain value.
 - B. Having some money.
 - C. Being an English person.
 - D. Being the king.

5. How did Wales become a member of the UK Parliament?
 - A. willingly
 - B. easily
 - C. happily
 - D. unwillingly

6. Why did Charles I bring back the Parliament?
 - A. To get rich.
 - B. To start a war.
 - C. To have somebody to rule.
 - D. To avoid a war.

7. What is the meaning of **bidding** at the end of the 8th paragraph?
 - A. bet
 - B. connection
 - C. request
 - D. purpose

8. How did England react when Ireland claimed its independence?
A. They stifled the rebellion.
B. They encouraged them to continue.
C. They issued more regulations.
D. They ended the Parliament.
9. What prevented Westminster from accepting the setting up of a new Irish Parliament?
A. The beginning of a military conflict.
B. The initiation of the "Home Rule".
C. The numerous acts of rebellion.
D. Their desire to be independent.
10. What is the main purpose of the text?
A. To persuade readers that a Parliament is necessary.
B. To outline the history of the UK Parliament.
C. To start a controversy.
D. To inspire readers.

SUBIECTUL I

(40 de puncte)

Write an e-mail to one of your friends, telling him/her about your personal experience in sports. Include the information about which sports you have played, what your attitude to sport is and how you think sport can help people in their lives. **Write your letter in 80-100 words.**

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You have been given this quote by your teacher: *All our dreams can come true if we have the courage to pursue them.* (Walt Disney) Write an essay giving your opinion on this issue. **Write your essay in 180-200 words.**